

A CHECK LIST FOR CONVERTING YOUR FILES
to a

SUBJECT NUMERIC FILING SYSTEM

Your files remain orderly and useable during this entire conversion.
Phase One usually can be accomplished in an hour with an average Office's files.
Phase Two can be done in spare moments on a few folders at a time
without interrupting the Office use of the files.

PHASE ONE---SEPARATING

1. Examine the folder labels used for your files.
2. Make a note of those subjects that are used in your files and are also listed as Primary Subjects on page 33 in the Handbook for Subject Filing.
3. Make up a file guide card (center position) for each Primary Subject used.
4. Arrange these guide cards alphabetically in an empty drawer.
5. Prepare to separate current active files from non-current inactive files.
(In most cases current files are those for the current year.)
6. Take one folder at a time and note its contents in general. Is it active?
7. Place each current active folder, AS IS, behind the guide card that best identifies its contents. (Don't worry just now about a few inactive papers that are still in some of these folders.)
8. Each folder of non-current records remains, AS IS, in the old file.
(Have a card on hand to mark your place in the drawer during interruptions.)
9. Folder by folder, work your way through your entire file.

(You now have an Active and an Inactive File. The Active File folders are in related groups behind new guide cards. The Inactive File remains as is, unchanged and available, but it could be put out of your way into a lower, less used, file drawer until retired to the Records Center or destroyed.)

PHASE TWO---REFINING

You will find your new separated files are more efficient, however, they can be even better. Your next step is to make new folders and refine your files.

1. First you must decide the secondary breakdowns your folders will need.
2. Take one Primary Subject at a time. Read the secondary breakdowns listed for it in the Filing Handbook. Make a list of those you will need.
(For example: Behind the guide labeled PERSONNEL you probably have several folders. It will be easier to find records if each folder is given its secondary classification, e.g. PERSONNEL, Awards.)
3. Prepare labels for the new file folders you will need. Some subjects need only a primary folder with no secondary. Some will be so large as to need a secondary and perhaps even a tertiary breakdown.
4. Work on only one Primary Subject at a time. Review the contents of each folder. Is the paper current? Is it related? Is a cross reference needed?
5. Put the current material into the proper new folders. Transfer non-current records back to the old inactive file. Destroy all unneeded duplicates.
6. Continue this review and refining action as quickly as possible in each subject category until you have reworked your entire file.
7. Make an Index of your new file and keep a copy in the front of your file drawer.

A good Cross Index is necessary to insure the consistent classification and filing of your Office records. Such a Cross Index is mandatory during absences and when more than one person works with the files. By adding a few entries, concerning those records unique to your Office, to the Cross Index in the back of the official Handbook for Subject Filing it may well serve as a Cross Index for your Office files.

HOW TO INSTALL THE SUBJECT-NUMERIC FILING SYSTEM

Reference: (a) Handbook For Subject Filing

1. First, glance over the material in your present file (or simply check the folder labels) and note which of the 31 subjects on page 33 of the Handbook apply. The alphabetical index beginning on page 72 will also help. Make up a file guide for each applicable subject. Arrange these guides alphabetically in an empty drawer or other vacant work space. A couple of boxes will do temporarily if cabinet space is tight.

2. Next, separate current files from your non-current records. ("Current" should be interpreted to mean "needed in the conduct of current business, regardless of the date of the document." However, in most cases current files will be those for the current year.) Simply take one folder at a time, note its contents and the date of the material. If a folder contains both current and non-current material, don't "break" the folder, transfer the entire folder to the new file you're setting up. Place each folder behind the primary guide that best identifies the contents of the folder (e.g. Personnel, Liaison, Security, etc.). Again you may wish to refer to the alphabetical index for guidance. Folder by folder work your way through the entire file. Be sure to write the primary classification on each folder in pencil to ensure its proper return should it be charged out.

3. Now you're in business. You've separated your active files from the bulk of your inactive records. You've also grouped related material together. In all probability you've found folders you never knew existed. You may also find duplicate documents filed in separate folders, or folders that have but one or two papers. Your next step then is to set up the necessary folders to refine your system.

To do this, first determine the secondary, and if necessary, the tertiary classification of each piece of current material behind a primary guide. Examine each folder. Often all of the material in one folder can be classified under one secondary classification such as "Attendance and Absence" which is a secondary heading under the primary, "PERSONNEL." In this case the entire folder can be classified. However, if a folder contains miscellaneous papers, for example on personnel matters, you'll need to classify each paper.

Make up the necessary folders that the volume and the number of secondary or tertiary subjects require. For instance, if the record volume is small, make a folder only for the primary subject, even though you may have classified some papers according to a secondary or tertiary category. Later, if the primary folder becomes full (20-30 pieces), you can set up secondary folders. Place the current material in the new folders, and transfer the balance of any non-current material back to the noncurrent file.

4. Continue the above process in succession for each subject category until you've reworked your entire file. You'll find that this can be done in spare moments without disrupting the orderliness of your files.